

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01  
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15  
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R 061033Z MAR 78  
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6986  
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1185

EO 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, LE  
SUBJ: LEBANON INTERNAL: CONVERSATIONS WITH BOUTROS AND AMIN  
AL-HAFEZ

1. HAD SEPARATE BUT RELATED CONVERSATIONS WITH FONMIN BOUTROS AND FORMER PRIME MINISTER AMIN AL-HAFEZ MARCH 3 ON SUBJECT OF NATIONAL CONCILIATION AND REBUILDING ARMY. IN BRIEF, BOUTROS SAYS THAT CHAMOUN AND GEMAYEL, ALTHOUGH TALKING ABOUT NEED FOR UNITY AND UNIFIED ARMY, ARE IN FACT WORKING AGAINST THOSE GOALS. THEY STILL CHERISHED ILLUSIONS THAT UNITED STATES WILL COME TO THEIR AID IN EVENT OF SHOWDOWN WITH SYRIANS. THEY BELIEVED THAT EVEN IF US WAS UNWILLING TO RESCUE THEM, ISRAEL WOULD DRAG IT INTO DOING SO. HE UNDERSTOOD THAT ISRAELIS HAD TOLD CHRISTIANS TO BE PATIENT FOR ANOTHER TWO WEEKS. THE IMPLICATION WAS THAT THEY WOULD BE PREPARED TO SUPPORT A NEW ADVENTURE AT THAT TIME.

2. HE SAID THESE SAME EXTREMISTS WHO WERE SO CRITICAL OF THE SLOW PACE OF THE SARKIS REGIME AND ITS WEAKNESS IN DEALING WITH THE SYRIANS BECAME AS MEEK AS LAMBS WHEN THEY PERSONALLY MET  
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WITH SYRIANS. SARKIS AND BOUTROS HAD STOOD UP TO THE SYRIANS MUCH MORE COURAGEOUSLY THAN CHAMOUNISTS OR GEMAYELS WHEN IT CAME TO BARGAINING TABLE.

3. BOUTROS SAID CHAMOUN HAD ASKED HIM WHAT AMERICANS WANTED, PLEADING THAT HE TOO WAS CONFUSED (I FIND THIS HARD TO BELIEVE). WE AGREED THAT WE WOULD HAVE JOINT MEETING WITH CHAMOUN NEXT

WEEK.

4. HAFEZ SAID HE HAD CONVEYED TO SARKIS, ON HIS RETURN FROM WASHINGTON, ATHERTON'S URGING THAT GOL GET ON WITH TALK OF REBUILDING ARMY. SARKIS HAD RESPONDED WITH SOME ASPERITY, ASKING RHETORICALLY IF PEOPLE THOUGHT HE DID NOT UNDERSTAND NEED TO DO JUST THAT AND WAS NOT DOING EVERYTHING HE COULD TO PUSH REBUILDING. HAFEZ HAD ALSO MET WITH PRIME MINISTER HOSS EARLIER IN DAY AND HAD ISSUED STATEMENT, WITH HOSS' APPROVAL, THAT TIME HAD COME FOR DECISIVE ACTION, AND REITERATING LEGITIMACY OF SARKIS MANDATE. HE IS NOT VERY SANGUINE ABOUT RESULTS, HOWEVER, BECAUSE HE FEELS SARKIS LACKS COURAGE TO MOVE DECISIVELY AND IMPOSE SETTLEMENT ON LEBANESE.

6. BOUTROS, WHOM I SAW BEFORE HAFEZ, SAID LATTER HAD ALSO GIVEN HIM ACCOUNT OF MEETING WITH ATHERTON. POINT THAT INTERESTED HIM MOST WAS ATHERTON'S HAVING EXPLAINED THAT WE CONSIDERED ALL PALESTINIANS, WHEREVER LOCATED, AS PART OF SAME PROBLEM AND HAD NO INTENTION SETTLING THEM IN LEBANON. HAFEZ HAD SAID ATHERTON HAD OFFERED TO MAKE PUBLIC TO THIS EFFECT IF THAT WOULD BE HELPFUL. GOL WOULD FIND THAT VERY USEFUL. I SAID I WANTED TO CHECK THE RECORD OF THE CONVERSATION BEFORE COMMENTING.

7. COMMENT: (A) BOTH SARKIS AND BOUTROS ARE FEELING DEFENSIVE ABOUT THE SLOW PACE OF THE REGIME AND ITS INABILITY TO DATE TO GRAPPLE SUCCESSFULLY WITH PROBLEM OF ARMY. BOUTROS SUGGESTED IT CONFIDENTIAL

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TIME FOR ME TO CALL ON SARKIS AND I PLAN TO DO SO IN NEXT FEW DAYS. WILL TRY TO GIVE HIM GENTLE DOSE OF GUT STIFFENER, BUT IT WILL NOT BE EASY. HE OBVIOUSLY IS TIRED OF BEING PREACHED AT. (B) IF IT IS TRUE ISRAELIS STILL GIVING CHRISTIANS TO BELIEVE THEY WILL SUPPORT THEM IN ANTI-SYRIAN VENTURE, IT IS DISTURBING. AT THIS POINT WE UNABLE TO EVALUATE THIS CLAIM. (C) I THOUGHT WE HAD KILLED THE IDEA THAT USG WAS PLANNING TO RESETTLE PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON. OBVIOUSLY IT IS STILL ALIVE IN MINDS OF SARKIS AND BOUTROS.  
PARKER

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
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